



مجلس أبوظبي للتعليم
Abu Dhabi Education Council
Education First **التعليم أولاً**



Inspection Report

Dar Al Uloom Private School

Academic Year 2013 – 14

Iqraa

Dar Al Uloom Private School

Inspection Date	3 – 5 February 2014
School ID#	186
Licensed Curriculum	Ministry of Education (MoE)
Number of Students	1250
Age Range	3 to 18 years
Gender	Mixed
Principal	Dalal Mohammed Adieb
School Address	Manaseer School Road, Al Ain
Telephone Number	+971 (0)3 767 6514
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Official Email (ADEC)	Daraluloomaa.pvt@adec.ac.ae
School Website	-----
Date of last inspection	22 – 25 April 2012

The overall effectiveness of the school

Inspectors considered the school in relation to 3 performance categories

Band A High performing (overall effectiveness grade 1, 2 or 3)

Band B Satisfactory (overall effectiveness grade 4 or 5)

Band C In need of significant improvement (overall effectiveness grade 6, 7 or 8)

The School was judged to be:	BAND C;	GRADE 6
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The main strengths of the school are:

- positive relationships between teachers and students
- committed leadership focused on school improvement
- students demonstrate respect for each other and other nationalities
- support of parents.

The main areas for improvement are to:

- raise overall standards to match more closely with international standards
 - improve the quality of teaching and learning particularly in Kindergarten (KG)
 - improve the KG curriculum and teachers' understanding of how young children learn
 - ensure more rigorous monitoring by leadership of teaching and learning, daily maintenance, Health and Safety procedures and class sizes
 - address the weak provision of resources to support improvement of 21st century skills and international standards
 - ensure that corporal punishment is eradicated and will not be tolerated.
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Introduction

The school was inspected by a team of 5 inspectors who observed 75 lessons as well as assemblies, snack and break periods, and student's arrival and departure. They met with school leaders, teachers, students and parents. Inspectors scrutinised students' work, and analysed performance data and documents provided by the school. In addition 298 responses from parents to a questionnaire were analysed.

Description of the School

Dar Al Uloom private school is located in the school zone in Al Ain. There are 1250 students on roll. The school follows the Ministry of Education (MOE) curriculum from KG to Grade 12. There are 4 phases; phase 1 is Kindergarten (KG), phase 2 is grades 1 to 5, phase 3 is grades 6 – 9, and phase 4 is grades 10 to 12. Boys and girls are taught separately from Grade 4. The stated vision of the school is to 'provide a high quality education in an interesting learning environment based on effective community participation to produce a loyal, talented generation that possesses the values, knowledge and skills to achieve the development goals of the country'.

The senior leadership comprises the Principal and two Vice-Principals; one is responsible for boys and the other for girls section.

Almost all students are of Arab heritage: only 4% are non-Arabs; 6% are Emirati, and the remainder are from a variety of countries including other Gulf states, Syria, Jordan and Egypt. The school has identified 12 students with special educational needs (SEN) and 70 students as being gifted and talented. It also states that 127 students are high achievers who score over 97% in tests.

ADEC approved tuition fees range from AED 3,300 in KG to AED 6,600 in Grade 12, which are in the very affordable to affordable category. The teaching staff is stable with only a few teachers leaving at the end of the school year.

The Effectiveness of the School

Students' attainment & progress

When measured against international standards and ADEC expectations, student attainment is unsatisfactory in all subjects across the school. In English, mathematics and science they are in line with schools offering a similar curriculum elsewhere in the region.

The progress students make from their starting points is more varied. It is unsatisfactory in Arabic, Islamic education. Social studies, science and information communication technology (ICT). The factors contributing to students' limited progress are also varied. In kindergarten (KG) progress is slow because teachers do not have a secure understanding of the way in which children of this age learn and develop. Elsewhere in the school, teachers do not make clear to students what they need to do to reach a satisfactory standard in the tasks they are set. It is even rarer for teachers to set and communicate individual attainment targets for students based on their previous learning, ability and academic development. This failure to take account of individual need significantly inhibits progress, especially for more able and SEN students.

The progress made by students in English and mathematics is more rapid than in other subject areas and is satisfactory across the school as a whole. From low starting points in KG, students' oral skill in English above average by the time they are assessed in the grade 12 MoE examinations. This is particularly the case for girls. Reading and writing skills in English remain weaker than oral skills throughout and fall below international standards, despite improvement in the final examinations outcomes over the last three years. In English and mathematics, better rates of progress are maintained by providing more opportunities than elsewhere for collaborative learning.

In Arabic, Islamic education and social studies, the unsatisfactory progress made by students from starting points in KG that are broadly age-appropriate reflects the limited opportunities students are given to develop the 21st century skills of problem solving, independent critical and creative thinking and learning self awareness. This is a major cause of unsatisfactory standards and progress across the school.

Students' personal development

Students' personal development is satisfactory. There is a strong element of mutual respect in the school and most students have positive attitudes to learning. In assemblies, students show they are proud to be in the UAE. They sing and salute the national anthem with enthusiasm. Students are aware of the

pluralism of the UAE and the opportunities this provides. Attendance is satisfactory at above 90%. The students are not yet strong independent learners. There are too few opportunities for them to engage in critical thinking and problem solving activities. Most girls are confident, enjoy discussion and work well together; boys' collaboration skills are less developed.

The school offers some leadership roles for students such as the new school council and the girls' English club. They also have opportunities to lead school assemblies and prayers. Students understand how to be safe and healthy. They would like a wider choice of physical and extra-curricular activities. The increased number of external visits provides students with a greater understanding of the world outside school.

The quality of teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning are unsatisfactory overall. Most teachers' subject knowledge and understanding is satisfactory. Their understanding of how students learn best is not always secure. Teachers talk too much and do not allow students sufficient time to discuss, share and reflect on their learning. All too often the textbook drives the teaching and learning. This limits the ability of the teacher to pitch the lesson to the needs of individual students. This is particularly so in KG where most teachers' understanding of how young children learn best is not secure. Teachers' professional development has helped to promote an improved collaborative approach to learning though its application in lessons remains inconsistent across the school. Students with SEN are beginning to be identified and educational plans have been introduced. Teachers do not refer to these plans in lessons and this slows students' progress.

There is better teaching in English and mathematics for older girls because teachers explain clearly what students need to learn and provide time for collaborative thinking. Questioning in these lessons is more skilled, challenging students' thinking skills. This practice is not consistent across the school and teachers' understanding of assessment for learning is an emerging skill. Target setting that is linked to individual attainment levels is weak; there is too much reliance on test marks and insufficient focus on what students need to do to improve. As a result, too many teachers do not have an adequate understanding of students' individual strengths and weaknesses.

Use of activity-based learning in lessons is improving, but remains unsatisfactory, especially in the boys' section. Planning is not sufficiently detailed to meet the range of most students' needs and most activities do not provide sufficient challenge for the more able. This limits opportunities for problem solving, higher order thinking and time for students to reflect on what has been learnt.

Opportunities for students to develop persistence and curiosity as well as practical skills are not a regular feature of lessons. Resources are very unsatisfactory and even those available are not always used well by either teachers or students.

Meeting students' needs through the curriculum

The implementation of the curriculum is unsatisfactory. It is narrow and provides students with limited choice, especially in the creative arts. It is textbook-dominated and this limits the development of students' independent learning skills. The level of challenge the curriculum provides is not always sufficient to meet the needs of the majority of students, particularly those of the more able. Information and communication technology (ICT) skills are not always used to effectively support learning in the classroom. Activities are often not well planned and do not always identify what children need to learn. The curriculum effectively promotes students' understanding and celebration of the culture and life in the UAE and particularly family values.

The KG curriculum is unsatisfactory and does not provide sufficient opportunities for children to be involved in activity-based learning and become independent learners with inquisitive and curious minds. The curriculum implementation is beginning to impact on the quality of learning in English and mathematics in the upper grades, especially in the girls' section. This is because planning and delivery is providing increased opportunities for collaborative learning.

Extra-curricular activities are very limited and both students and parents expressed the need for the school to provide more choices. The quality of guidance to support older students to prepare them for the next stages of their education or workplace is variable. There are positive links with the local community such as liaison with local universities with student teacher placements in the school; links with local companies are less developed.

The protection, care, guidance and support of students

Protection, care and support of students are satisfactory. The social workers provide supportive pastoral care for students and support students well. There is a central record to ensure all staff are appropriately qualified and are suitable to work in the school. There is a child protection policy and procedures are understood and followed by most teachers. Attendance is good at 96%.

Rewards and sanctions are appropriate and support the positive behaviour of students. A few boys allege that corporal punishment still exists but leadership states that corporal punishment by any member of the staff is strictly forbidden. There are two prayer rooms, one each for boys and girls. The medical staff ensure

all students are suitably supported with first aid and detailed medical records are maintained.

Some school buses often arrive late and procedures to ensure punctual arrival are not rigorous. Arrangements to ensure students' safe use of school transportation and drop off and pick up of students by parents, are appropriate. The quality of support for students' academic achievement is beginning to improve with performance data being more closely scrutinised by senior leaders.

The quality of the school's buildings and premises

The quality of the school's buildings and premises is unsatisfactory. There are no dedicated science laboratories for the boys' section, they share the girls' facilities, and there are no indoor sports areas. The indoor premises are safe but the shortages in specialist areas limits support for the curriculum. The boys' section is in urgent need of redecoration. Maintenance checks are not thorough enough to ensure high standards of cleanliness and hygiene. Security procedures are inadequate because the security guard does not always challenge, record, and check visitors' details. The school site has limited outside space in both the boys' and girls' sections restricting recreational use by students. The KG has a spacious outdoor covered area that is well resourced for play.

The school's resources to support its aims

Teachers have the required qualifications, value professional development and know they need to improve their understanding of how students learn best. School transport is appropriately maintained in a safe and reliable condition.

Provision for ICT in classrooms is poor with inadequate provision of data projectors and this limits the effectiveness of both teaching and learning throughout the school. There is also a shortage of physical education (P.E) equipment, science resources and laboratories in the boys' section, and fiction and non-fiction books in the library. KG resources to support activity-based learning in the classroom are very unsatisfactory. These shortages restrict students from accessing suitable curriculum content as well as developing investigative and research skills. Overall the school's resources to support its aims are very unsatisfactory.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Leadership and management are not ensuring an adequate standard of education. Senior leaders are beginning to have a better understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Their knowledge of what to do to improve the school is limited. Some progress has been made since the last inspection to improve students' well-being, care and health and safety. Senior leaders are

beginning to provide more support for subject leaders. This support is not sufficiently focused or regular. The day-to-day running of the school is adequate.

Self-evaluation is inaccurate and lacks rigour. It is not sufficiently linked to school development planning to raise students' standards in all subjects and drive improvement. Leadership and teachers do not use the results of assessment in lessons in order to inform planning and ensure the learning needs of all students are met. Resources are very unsatisfactory and this is a barrier to improving both standards and developing students' 21st century skills. Professional development is regular and is complemented by the support provided by local universities. The impact of these professional development opportunities is varied and still at an early stage. The monitoring of teaching and learning has improved. It still lacks rigour and focus and insufficient feedback is given to teachers to guide improvement. Subject leaders are not always aware of what needs to improve and are given limited opportunity to drive school improvement.

Parents are supportive of the school and would like to have more representation to share ideas with senior leaders. Responses from parents' questionnaire indicate that they generally have a positive view of the school.

Progress since the last inspection

The previous inspection required improvements to be made to the quality of teaching, the quality and accountability of leaders and managers, the curriculum implementation, and health and safety aspects. Students' safety and wellbeing is now satisfactory. There has been little progress in the other areas.

Leadership have undertaken self-evaluation and judgments have been made; most are inaccurate because they are overly optimistic. This seriously impedes senior leaders' ability to drive strategic improvements or to improve classroom practice. Teaching and learning remain inadequate largely because teachers do not adapt the curriculum to meet the individual needs of students. The lack of resources further impedes teachers' ability to create the necessary conditions for effective learning.

The school has not demonstrated that it has sufficient capacity to make improvements. It will require external support to do so, with particular regard to improving the quality of teaching in order to raise academic standards.

What the school should do to improve further:

1. Raise attainment in all subjects to more closely match international standards.
2. Ensure all students and teachers understand that any form of corporal punishment will not be tolerated and that students are aware of the procedures of reporting any physical abuse.
3. Ensure robust monitoring by senior leaders to inform more accurate self-evaluation by:
 - i. ensuring teaching and learning is monitored and strengths and areas for improvement are identified
 - ii. undertaking planned observations of students' learning activities and using skilled questioning to challenge and improve progress
 - iii. using individual attainment targets to accurately track progress over time and identify student's strengths and areas for improvement.
4. Provide a professional development programme to:
 - i. improve teachers' understanding of how students learn best, particularly KG children;
 - ii. support teachers understanding of how to more effectively support inquiry based learning
 - iii. improve teachers' understanding and use of assessment for learning.
5. Ensure senior leaders give subject leaders more responsibility for:
 - i. making accurate judgements of their subjects and areas of responsibility as part of whole school self-evaluation
 - ii. identifying strengths and weaknesses in their areas of responsibility and draft and agree action plans with clear success criteria to ensure improvement in overall school effectiveness.
6. Ensure senior leaders agree and implement a rigorous and regular maintenance schedule that:
 - i. results in more robust monitoring of the daily maintenance checks to ensure good standards of cleanliness and hygiene in toilets and classrooms as well as ensuring that Health and Safety is maintained to at least the present satisfactory levels
 - ii. ensures security is robust and exact visitor details are accurately recorded and visitor passes are issued and returned.

7. Urgently address the very unsatisfactory range of resources issues by:
 - i. improving ICT in classrooms
 - ii. increasing provision for practical science for all students
 - iii. providing learning resources in the KG for classroom active based learning
 - iv. sourcing additional fiction and non-fiction books in the library
 - v. providing PE equipment for boys and girls
 - vi. providing mathematical resources to support teaching in the lower grades.

Inspection Grades

	Band A High performing			Band B Satisfactory		Band C In need of significant improvement		
Performance Standard	Outstanding	Very Good	Good	Satisfactory & Improving	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Very unsatisfactory	Poor
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Standard 1: Students' attainment and progress								
Standard 2: Students' personal development								
Standard 3: The quality of teaching and learning								
Standard 4: The meeting of students' needs through the curriculum								
Standard 5: The protection, care, guidance and support of students								
Standard 6: The quality of the school's buildings and premises								
Standard 7: The school's resources to support its aims								
Standard 8: The effectiveness of leadership and management								
Summary Evaluation: The school's overall effectiveness								